

Montana Driver Education and Training

Strategies for Aggressive Driving



Standards and Benchmarks

1. Laws and Highway System

- a. know the laws outlined in the Montana Driver's manual
- b. understand the laws outlined in the Montana Driver's manual
- c. consistently demonstrate knowledge and understanding by responsible adherence to highway transportation system traffic laws and control devices

2. Responsibility

- a. recognize the importance of making safe and responsible decisions for owning and operating a vehicle
- b. demonstrate the ability to make appropriate decisions while operating a motor vehicle
- c. consistently display respect for other users of the highway transportation system
- d. develop habits and attitudes with regard to responsible driving

3. Visual Skills

- d. develop habits and attitudes with regard to proper visual skills

4. Vehicle Control

- b. develop habits and attitudes relative to safe, efficient and smooth vehicle operation.

5. Communication

- a. consistently communicate their driving intentions (i.e., use of lights, vehicle and personal signals)
- b. adjust their driver behavior based on observation of highway transportation system and other users
- c. adjust communication (i.e., use of lights, vehicle and personal signals) based on observation of highway transportation system and other users
- d. develop habits and attitudes relative to effective communication

6. Risk Management

- a. understand driver risk-management principles
- b. demonstrate driver risk-management strategies
- c. develop driver risk-management habits and attitudes

7. Lifelong Learning

- a. understand past, present and future vehicle and roadway design, and driving cultures
- b. describe past, present and future motor vehicle laws
- c. understand benefits of a lifelong learning approach to driving
- e. identify opportunities for lifelong education in driving



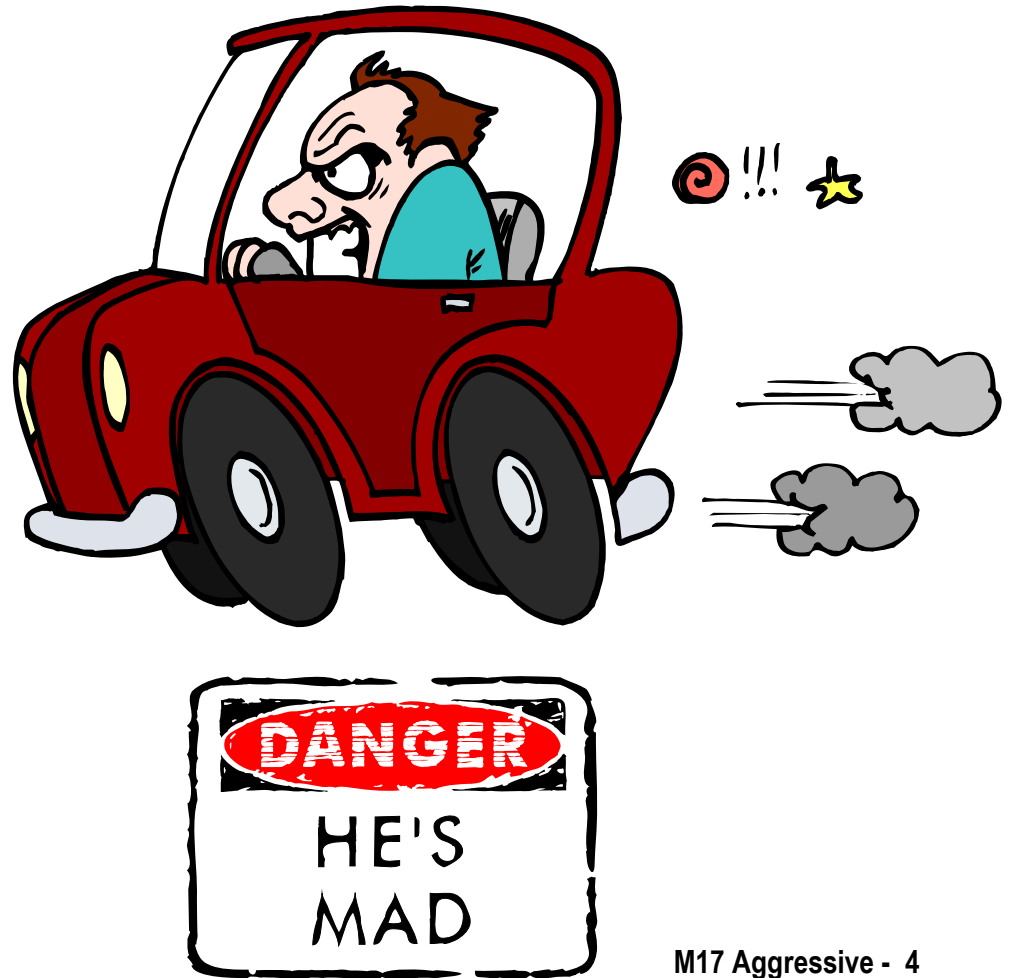
What is Aggressive Driving?

- Angry, impatient motorist or passenger
- Intentionally injures or kills another motorist, passenger or pedestrian
- Aggressive because of a traffic dispute, altercation, or grievance



What is Road Rage?

- Display of aggression by a driver
- The more extreme acts of aggression, such as a physical assault, that occurs as a direct result of a disagreement between drivers



The High-Risk Drivers: Frustration High, Concern Low



Climb into the anonymity of an automobile and take out their frustrations on anybody at any time

- Run stop signs and red lights
- Speed
- Tailgate
- Weave in and out of traffic
- Pass on the right
- Make improper and unsafe lane changes
- Make hand and facial gestures
- Scream
- Honk
- Flash their lights
- Follow too closely
- Change lanes frequently and abruptly without notice
- Pass on the shoulder or unpaved portions of the roadway
- Leer at and/or threaten - verbally or through gestures

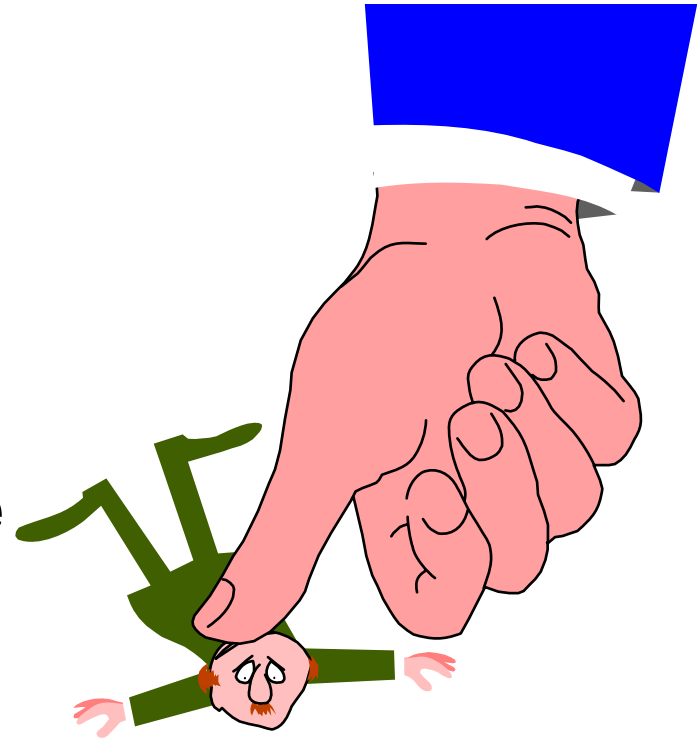


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Who are the Aggressive Drivers?

- No one profile of the aggressive driver
- The majority are relatively young, relatively poorly educated males who have criminal records, histories of violence, and drug or alcohol problems
- May have suffered an emotional or professional setback
- People who snap and commit incredible acts of violence

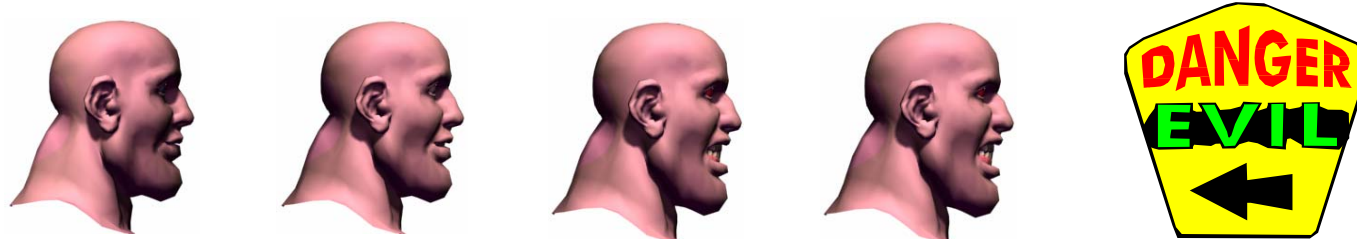


Who are the Aggressive Drivers?

- **Successful men and women with no known histories of crime, violence, or alcohol and drug abuse**
- **Friends and neighbors of these individuals, say "he is the nicest man," "a wonderful father," or "she must have been provoked"**
- **Could be male (as is usually the case), or female, young (usually), or old, educated or uneducated, rich or poor**



Who are the Aggressive Drivers?



- Aggression can be sparked by trivial events
 - "He stole my parking space"
 - "She cut me off"
- It is often the cumulative result of a series of stressors in the motorist's life
- It's often "the straw that broke the camel's back"



Poor Driving Habits that Lead to Aggression

Actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry

- Passing traffic on the right shoulder of the road
- Blocking traffic by driving slow in the outside lane
- Failing to yield to faster traffic by moving to the right
- Pressuring others by tailgating
- Passing then cutting back in sharply in front of the other driver
- Not yielding to pedestrians and bicyclists



Poor Driving Habits that Lead to Aggression

Actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry

- Not coming to a complete stop at stop signs
- Running red lights
- Driving through a yellow light
- Failing to follow right of way rules
- Driving 10 miles below the speed limit when conditions don't warrant slow speeds
- Speeding
- Failing to use turn signals



Poor Driving Habits that Lead to Aggression

Actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry

- Reducing a gap to prevent others from entering
- Failing to reduce high beams with oncoming drivers
- Flashing high beams to the driver in front
- Long blasts of the horn
- Weaving in and out of traffic lanes at high speed
- Returning inappropriate gestures to other drivers



Poor Driving Habits that Lead to Aggression

Actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry

- Driving in HOV lanes to pass others
- Talking on a cell phone and drifting within the lane or driving too slow
- Using more space in a parking area that prevents others from using a parking space
- Letting the car door hit cars parked along side
- Taking a parking space that someone else has been waiting for



Poor Driving Habits that Lead to Aggression

Actions that annoy, frustrate or make other drivers angry

- Using loud music that can be heard for long distances
- Eating while driving
- Stopping in the road to talk with someone outside the vehicle
- Failing to turn right on red when conditions warrant turning
- Drag racing
- Making rude gestures



The Three Types of Aggressive Drivers

1. The quiet road rage driver

Complaining, rushing, competing, resisting

- Brakes suddenly to scare a tailgater
- Exceeds speed limits by more than 10 mph
- Cruises in the passing lane
- Criticizes other drivers



The Three Types of Aggressive Drivers

2. The verbal road rage driver

- Yelling, cussing, staring, honking, insulting
- Constantly ridiculing and criticizing other driver to self or passengers
- Closes the gap to deny entry
- Giving the “look”
- Speeding past another vehicle, revving the engine



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The Three Types of Aggressive Drivers

3. The epic road rage driver

- Cutting off, blocking, chasing, fighting, shooting
- Carries a weapon — just in case
- Deliberately bumps or rams another vehicle
- Tries to run a vehicle off the road to punish
- Tries to run someone down
- Will get out of a vehicle to beat or batter someone
- Has thoughts of killing



The Road Rage Driver

Drivers that escalate minor driving situations into full-blown road rage have negative attitudes about others

- **Want to retaliate against others**
- **Wants to injure other roadway users**
- **Has no regard for the feelings and rights of other users**
- **Believes rage is caused by others**
- **Does not accept criticism of his own driving behavior**
- **Disregards the comfort and safety of passengers**



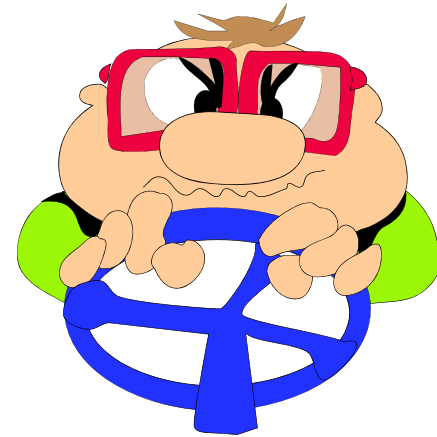
Fantasies and Irrational Actions

- Believes the vehicle hides you from other drivers so no one can see you
- Thinks others are out to get him
- Critical about the other driver's appearance or their vehicle
- Thoughts of violence against others
- Believes their driving is not part of the problem
- Don't observe laws they don't agree with



Traffic Congestion Leads to Frustration

- The common thread when drivers get into an altercation is traffic congestion
- Frustration is not contained and drivers demonstrate their frustration

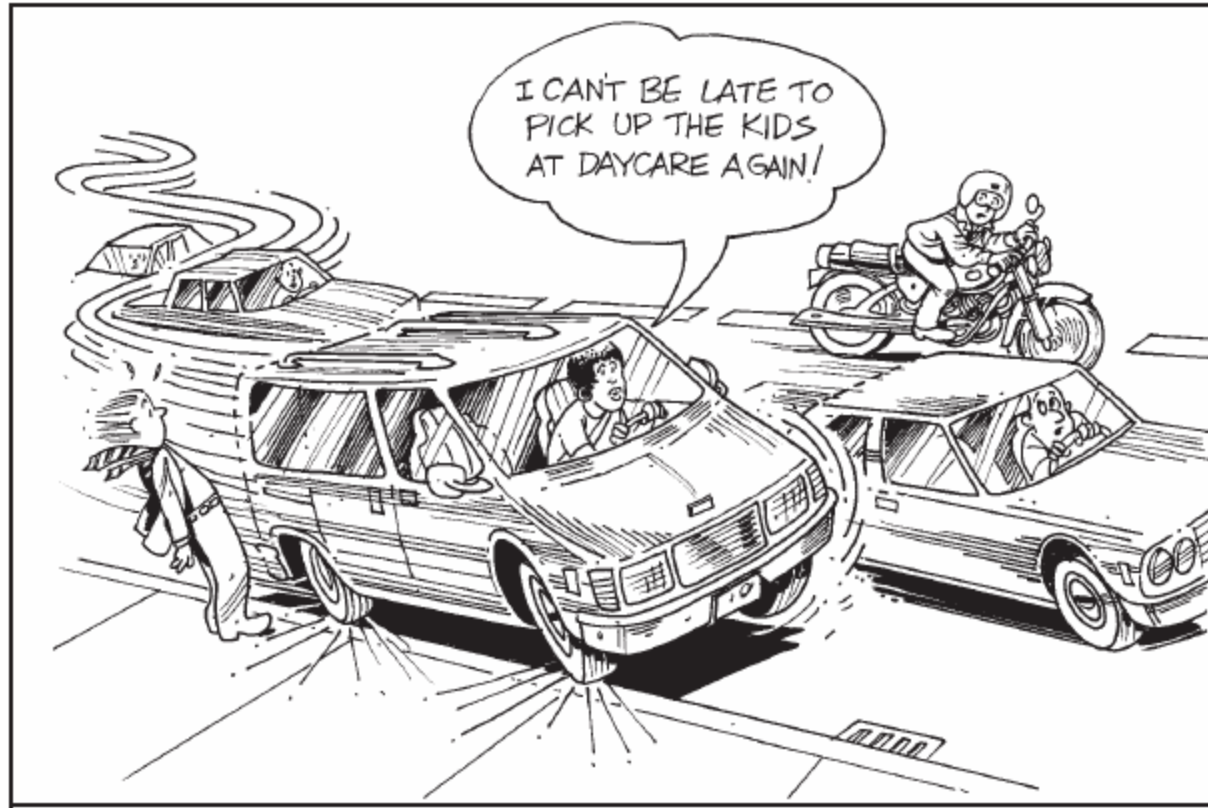


Anxieties Leading to Dangerous Driving Behaviors

- “I’m going to be late if I don’t hurry up”
- “Why is traffic going so slow?”
- “I’ll never make it”
- “If only I had gone a little faster, I could’ve made it”
- “Oh no! Red light”
- “All of these cars are trying to squeeze in!”
- “Ha! I’ll speed up and show him a lesson!”
- “Everyone else is speeding”



Anxieties Leading to Dangerous Driving Behaviors



Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
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What is Anger?

- Anger is a feeling of displeasure or hostility
- It's a normal, healthy emotion, just like any other feeling



Anger is Emotion, a Body Response, a Thought

- **Emotion** — How you feel, such as sadness, disappointment or frustration
- **Body responds** to anger, with muscle tension or an increase in heart rate and blood pressure as the body releases adrenaline — the fight-or-flight hormone
- **What a person thinks about anger can** acknowledge that it's OK to be frustrated, or, on the other end, think that the world is out to get them or that friends "never" do what you ask



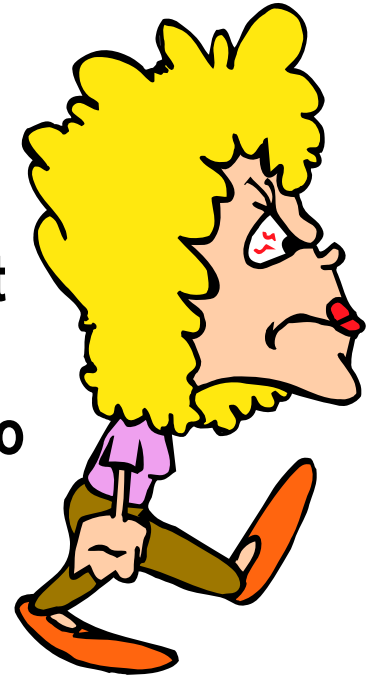
Anger is Emotion, a Body Response, a Thought

- Anger is a warning bell that tells a person something is wrong in a situation
- It's a natural response to perceived threats
- Being angry isn't always a bad thing
- It can prevent others from taking advantage
- It can motivate people to change societal issues
- The problem is how people handle anger



How can Anger be Managed?

- State your concerns and needs without hurting others
Inappropriate expression of anger can be harmful to good health
- Anger can cause headaches, lack of sleep, high blood pressure and digestion problems
- Stress and hostility related to anger can lead to a heart attack
- Out-of-control anger is a learned behavior that needs to be unlearned
- Practice anger management techniques
- Walk away until calmed down
- Remember everyone wants to be treated fairly



How can Anger be Managed?

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated
- Agree to disagree
- Learn to control emotions
- Show tolerance
- Be forgiving



STRATEGIES TO REDUCE CONFLICTS

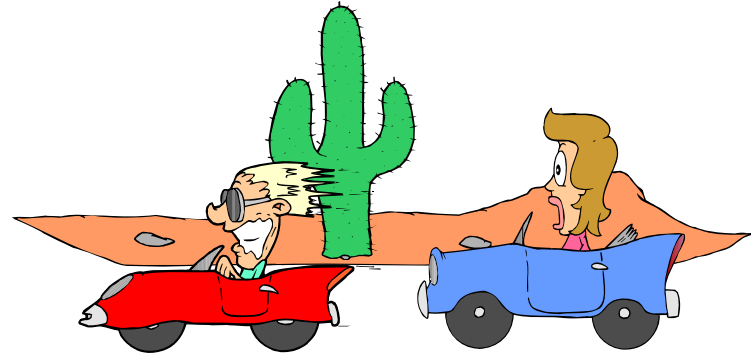
- Don't respond
- Don't make eye contact with hostile drivers
- Instead, get out of the way but do not acknowledge the other driver
- If a motorist pursues you, do not go home—drive to a police station, convenience store, or other location where you can get help and there will be witnesses
- Don't up the ante
- Swallow your pride
- Choose the road “less traveled”



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Lane blocking

- Don't block the passing lane
- Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle that wants to overtake you
- If someone demands to pass, allow them to do so



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Tailgating

- Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you
- Dozens of deadly traffic altercations began when one driver tailgated another



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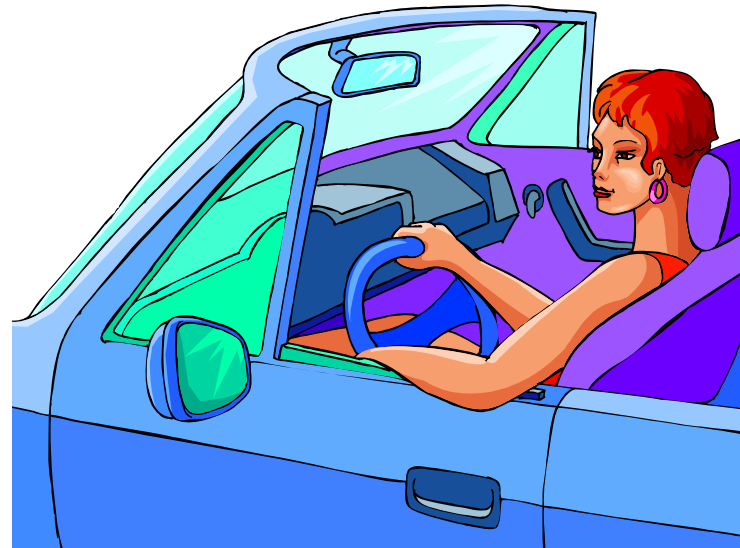
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Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Signal

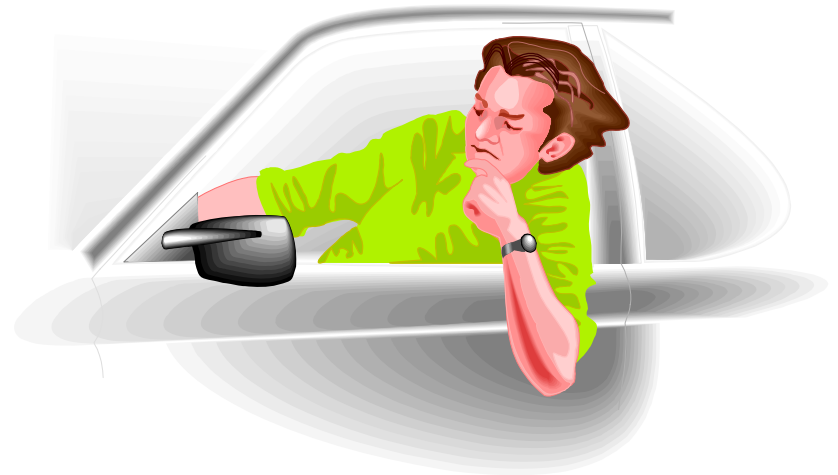
- Don't switch lanes without first signaling your intention, check blind spots, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over
- After you've made the maneuver, turn your signal off



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Gestures

- Raising a middle finger to another driver could trigger a violent response
- Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed, or beaten in every state



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Horn

- Use the horn sparingly
- If you must—tap your horn lightly
- Think twice before using your horn to say "hello" to a passing pedestrian
- Don't blow your horn at the driver in front of you the second the light turns green



If a stressed-out motorist is on edge, the noise may set him off
Scores of shootings began with a driver honking the horn



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Failure to turn

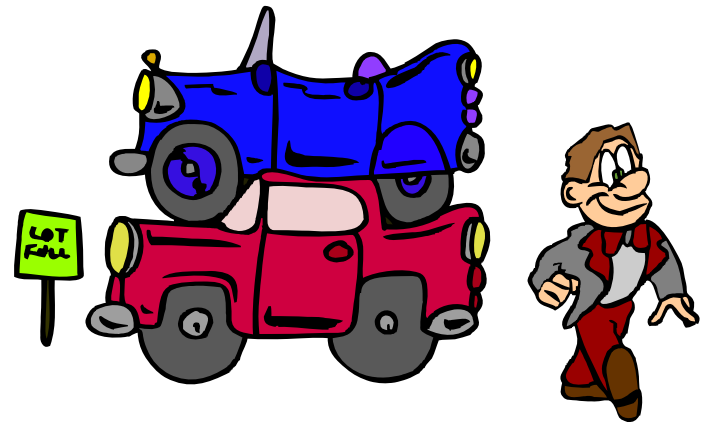
- In most areas right-hand turns are allowed after a stop at a red light
- Avoid the right-hand lane if you are not turning right



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Parking

- Do not take more than one parking space
- Do not park in a handicapped parking space if you are not handicapped
- Don't allow your door to strike an adjacent parked vehicle
- When parallel parking, do not tap the other vehicles with your own
- Look before backing up



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Headlights

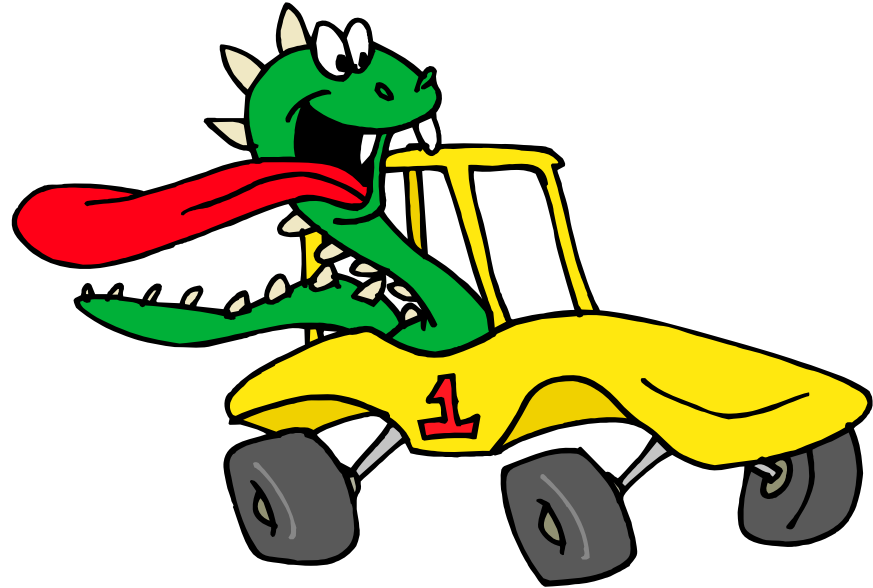
- Keep headlights on low beam, except where conditions require high beams
- Dim the headlights for oncoming traffic
- Don't retaliate to oncoming high beams with your own in order to "teach them a lesson"
- Don't approach a vehicle from the rear with high beams — dim your lights as soon as a passing vehicle is alongside



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Merging

- When traffic permits, move out of the right-hand acceleration lane of a freeway to allow vehicles to enter from the on-ramps



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Blocking traffic

- If pulling a trailer or driving a cumbersome vehicle that impedes traffic behind you, pull over at the first opportunity so that motorists behind can pass
- Do not block the road to talk with a pedestrian on the sidewalk
- Dozens of shootings suggest that this behavior irritates a lot of people



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Cell phones

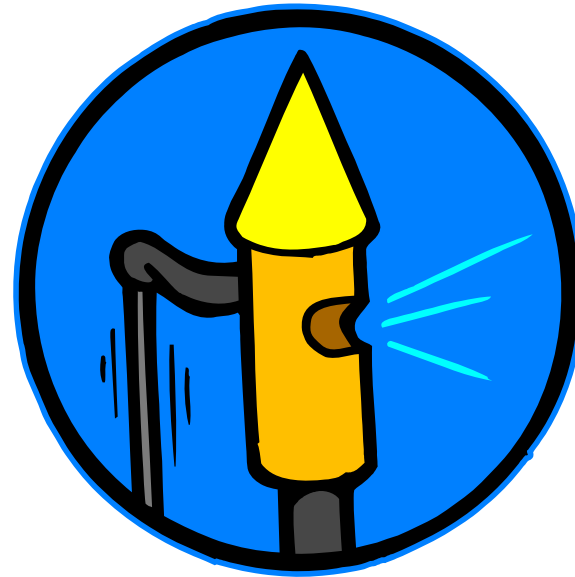
- Don't let the cell phone become a distraction—keep your eyes and attention on the road
- Cell phones can be great for security but bad for safety
- Cell phone users are widely perceived as being poor drivers and as being a traffic hazard



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Alarms

- If the vehicle is equipped with an antitheft alarm, know how to turn it off
- When buying an alarm, select one that turns off after a short period of time



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

Displays

- Confederate flags on pickup trucks are not a good idea
- Refrain from showing any type of bumper sticker or slogan that could be offensive



Reduced Risk Habits to Prevent Others from Becoming Aggressive

- If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact



Reduce Stress

- Traffic stress, indeed, anger in general, is hazardous to your health
- Stress from road congestion is a major contributing factor to violent traffic disputes
- Making a few simple changes in the way you approach driving can significantly lower your stress level
- Let the driver into the lane with a smile



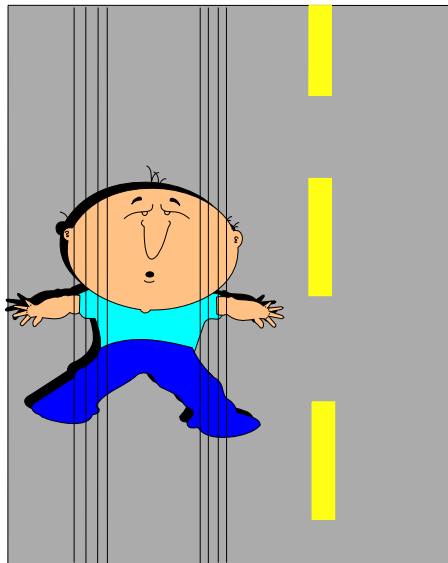
Consider Altering your Schedule

- Avoid the worst congestion
- Allow plenty of time so you don't have a need to speed, beat traffic lights, or roll through stop signs
- Think — is it really the end of the world if you are a bit late?
- Could you plan your day to leave a little earlier?



Improve the Comfort of your Vehicle

- Use the air conditioner
- Listen to light music that reduces anxiety; avoid anger-inducing talk radio, for example
- Use a pillow or seat cover to make your seat more comfortable



Concentrate on Being Relaxed

- Don't clench your teeth
- Loosen the grip on the wheel
- Take a deep breath
- Do limited exercises and stretches for the arms and legs



Concentrate on Being Relaxed

- Don't drive when you are angry, upset, or overtired
- Know that you can't control the traffic but you *can* control your reaction to it

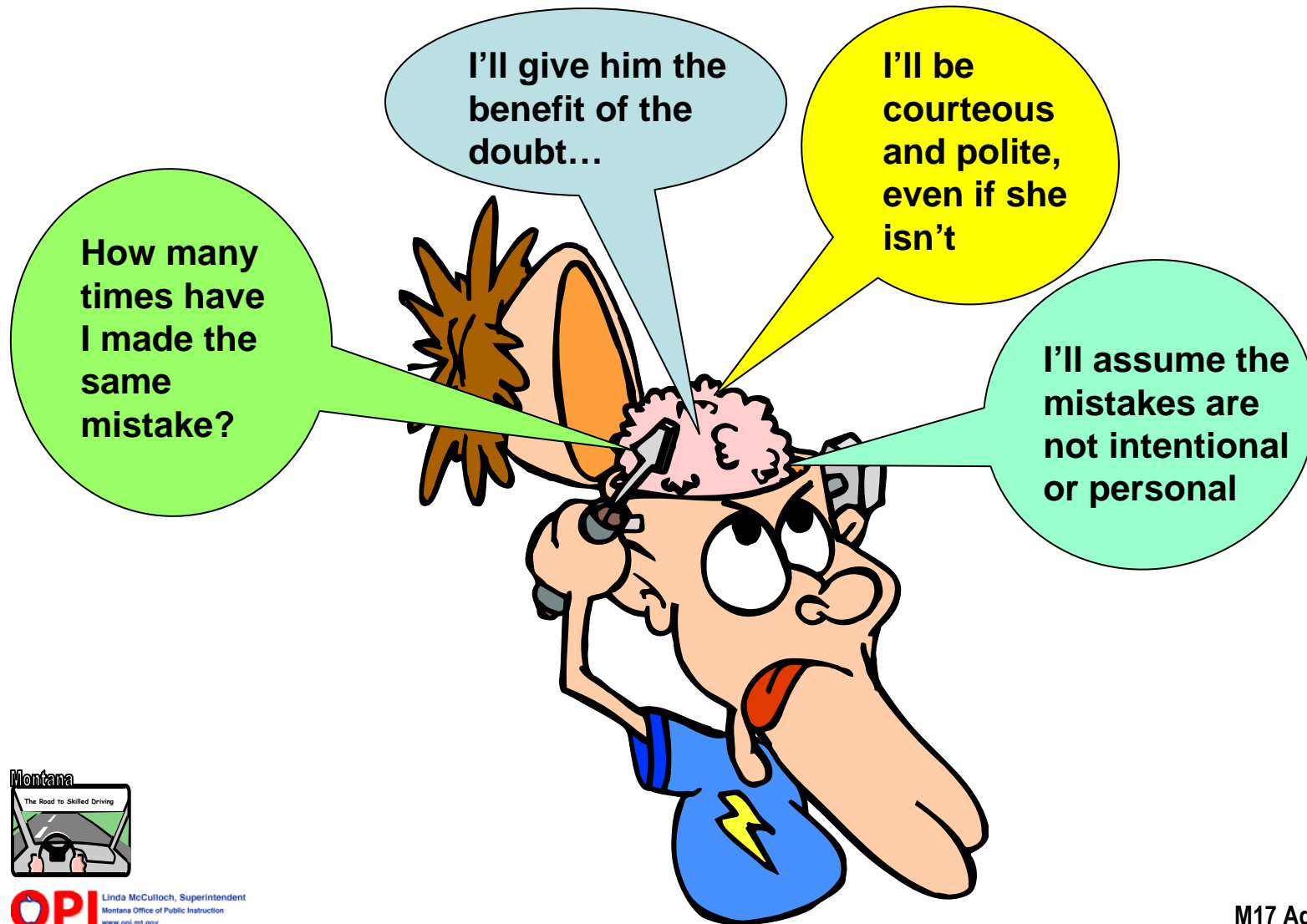


Concentrate on Being Relaxed

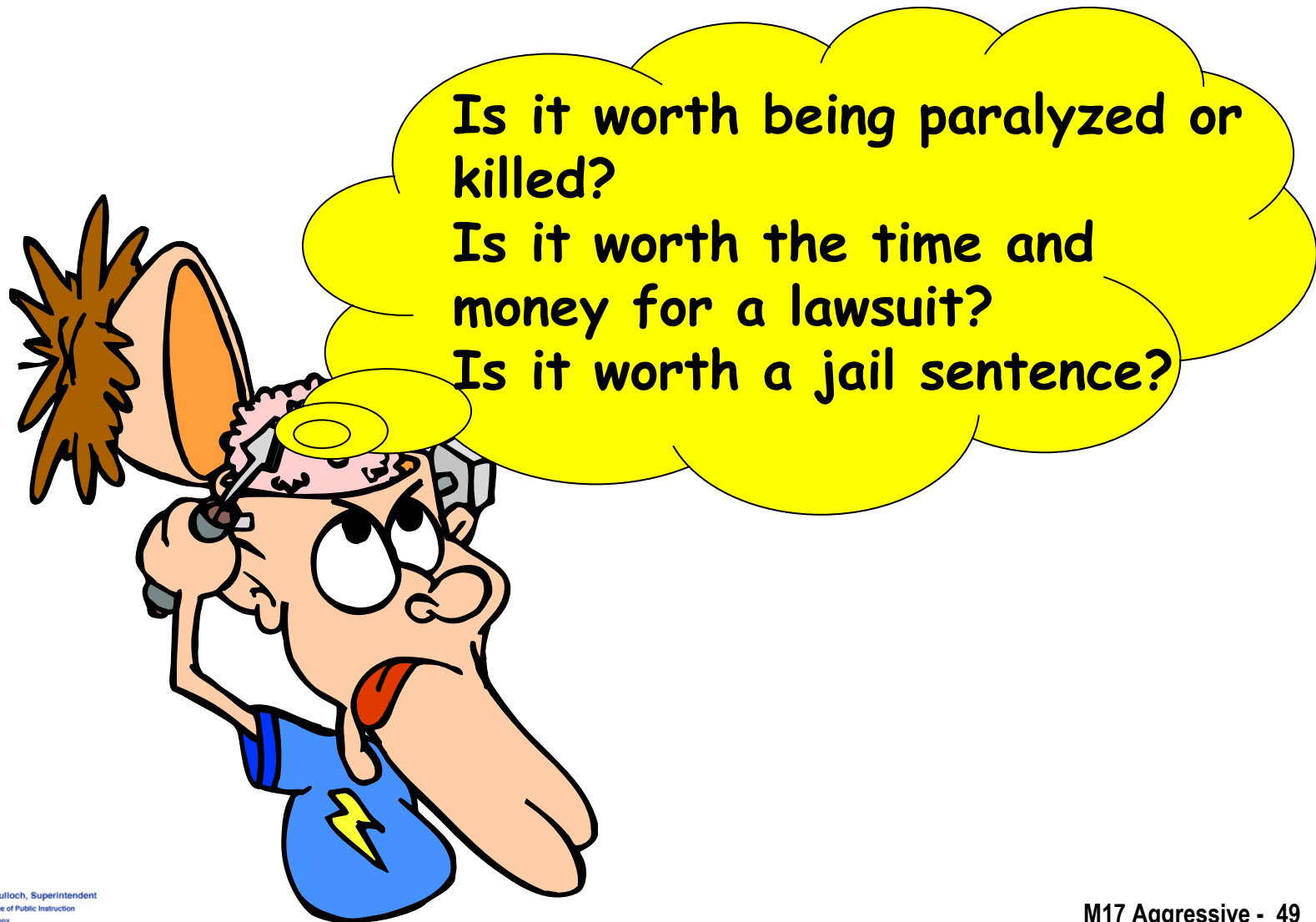
• Chill Out



Adjust Attitude



Adjust Attitude



Adjust Attitude

- Remember, split-second impulsive actions can ruin the rest of your life
- Don't become an aggressive driver
- Avoid any conflict if possible
- If challenged, take a deep breath and get out of the way, even if you are right — you don't want to be dead right
- Try being more forgiving and tolerant
- Keep your sense of humor



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Adjust Attitude

- Recognize the absurdity of traffic disputes and focus on what is really important in life
- Enjoy the drive, the scenery, and the controlled movements in driving
- Enjoy sentiments of good will towards other road users
- Experience a relaxed good feeling during driving
- Perform random acts of kindness

